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The Stouffer Report: *Your Responses to Drug Tests for Welfare*

Since my office received so much feedback from the proposal ([Senate Bill 607](#)) to test work-eligible welfare recipients suspected of substance abuse, I wanted to share just a portion of the responses with you.

For those not familiar with the legislation, individuals utilizing Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) who are suspected of using illegal drugs would be tested. If positive, the recipient would be referred to a treatment program and assistance for dependents would be provided to a third-party, such as a grandparent. Here are some responses from constituents on the proposal:

"I agree on the drug testing 100 percent!"
— Slater, MO

"Your bill truly seems harsh."
— Kearney, MO

"I work hard for my money and see a lot of people that are on welfare or disability and are as capable of working as I am. I have to take drug tests to keep getting paid, so why shouldn't those that are getting free money. I have no problem helping those that truly need help." (As an aside, I drive a truck for my real job as a farmer and I am also required to take an annual drug test. A proposal in the Missouri House would require the same for all legislators.)
— Macon County, MO

"A bill like this should have been passed 20 years ago. No work, no pay. Welfare needs a complete overhaul."
— Marshall, MO

"[Regarding the proposal, if] somebody is down, [welfare is here] to help you (of course there is a little humiliation involved-drug test to boot) and if you don't tow our line we'll kick you while you're down."
—Rayville, MO

"Welfare for the children are some family's main source of

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income, the more children, equals more income! This should be the next bill you should address.”

— Arrow Rock, MO

“I think this is a great idea that most of the working class has talked about for years. It’s time to act on this.”

— Sweet Springs, MO

“Where are you getting the money to pay for the tests?” (Current estimates show the tests will cost around \$50 each. There is a big expense in the administrative hearings for appeals and folks that want to reapply after a three year wait period.)

— Lexington, MO

“I would go one step further and suggest that anyone receiving government assistance of any kind not be allowed to visit the casinos and gamble.”

— Marshall, MO

“We want to say that we support your trying to do something about this criminal behavior. Good for you. We are behind you. Keep up the good work for Missourians and the country.”

—Ozark, MO

“I strongly agree with your proposed bill. I worked as a caseworker and I have wished we would require this for a long time.”

— Benton County, MO

“I grew up on the streets [in an urban area] and saw it both before and after implementation of the welfare system. I know the poverty and the 'trap' that it puts people into. Which is, I guess, what liberals wanted; to make the people dependent upon them.”

— Orrick, MO

Keep your comments coming. The more feedback I get from you, the better I am able to do my job in Jefferson City. I have enjoyed the responses on this topic for the past several weeks.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

